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House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. CORREA).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
January 11, 2022.

I hereby appoint the Honorable J. LUIS CORREA to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

NANCY PELOSI,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 10, 2022, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with time equally allocated between the parties and each Member other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip limited to 5 minutes, but in no event shall debate continue beyond 11:50 a.m.

FIGHTING FOR WORKING FAMILIES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Illinois (Mrs. BUSTOS) for 5 minutes.

Mrs. BUSTOS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to mark the beginning of my final year in Congress. Throughout my five terms, I have always made working families my number one priority.

So, in my final year, what is at the top of my list to make sure that I am focusing on? Well, right now it is reinstating the child tax credit that just expired this month. Hardworking fami-

lies who are just trying to get by have come to count on that support month to month since we passed that last year.

Now, there are 71,000 families, just in the congressional district that I serve, who won't see that deposit into their bank account starting this month. So let's get to work.

In Illinois, more than half of the children living in poverty don't have a seat in the pre-K classroom. So let's get to work.

Parents across our Nation are spending a good chunk of their take-home pay for the childcare that they need in order to be able to go to work, and it is our job to help make that more affordable. So let's get to work.

I have got 1 year left in Congress and so much to accomplish, so I say to my own staff, I say to myself, I say to everybody in this body, let's get to work.

KEEPING SCHOOLS OPEN MUST BE A PRIORITY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX) for 5 minutes.

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, against science and common sense, many traditional government schools continue to shut children out of the classroom.

The Biden administration has repeatedly put the political agenda of teachers' unions above the needs of children.

Throughout this pandemic, the Biden administration has ignored the concerns of parents and has, instead, crafted its COVID-19 school guidelines in accord with the demands of union bosses.

The Biden administration's Centers for Disease Control and Prevention consulted American Federation of Teachers, AFT, President Randi Weingarten for help in shaping guidance on school reopening. Entrusting a union boss and major campaign donor

to make public health decisions is completely unacceptable.

Teachers' unions took full advantage of the pandemic. They bullied and coerced the Biden administration until they got almost everything they asked for. Anytime the Biden administration resisted their demands, these unions had a meltdown, publicly shaming the administration, staging sick-outs, and making their demands even more elaborate and unreasonable.

According to CDC guidance, schools can safely stay open. The data proves that schools are not and have never been a major vector of spread. Yet, even with all the scientific data, teachers' unions are holding their ground at the cost of students' well-being.

This pandemic has taken a major toll on young people. Children, who are at the lowest risk of being made seriously ill by COVID-19, have been forced out of the classrooms by the demands of teachers' unions.

Forcing students to learn behind a screen has led to devastating consequences. According to a report by Curriculum Associates, the number of students testing at two or more grade levels below their own grade has significantly increased since the pandemic. The numbers are worse for students who are already at risk.

For example, 49 percent of third graders who come from low-income areas are now two or more grade levels behind in reading and math. This is an increase of 10 to 12 percent since before the pandemic began.

Because of school closures, many students have also been suffering from isolation, depression, and anxiety. It was alarming to read that the number of ER visits for suspected suicide attempts by teenage girls rose from early 2019 to early 2021 by 51 percent.

This is a public health crisis in and of itself yet one that is being ignored by many of the decisionmakers at both the national and local level in favor of special interest groups like the AFT.

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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